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A D V I C E
AND
CONSOLATION
FOR A
PERSON IN DEJECTION
OF MIND,
BY M. DE FENELON.

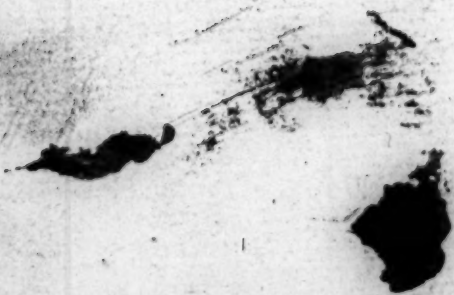
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Laid down by the British Museum

AND
COLLECTION
NOTATION



PERSON IN DEFECTION
OF MIND

BY M. DE FENELON.



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A D V I C E

A N D

C O N S O L A T I O N

Salignac de la Motte Fenelon 17.
FOR A

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P E R S O N I N D I S T R E S S

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P R I N T E D A N D S O L D B Y R . & A . F O U L I S

M D C C L.

ADVICE

AND

CONSOLATION

FOR A

PERSON IN DISTRESS

AND LOSS OF MIND

WITH REMEDIES
ON THE ASSASSINATION



WROTE FOR THE USE OF A FRIEND

BY M. D. KENNEDY

ARCHBISHOP AND DEER

OF CAMBRIDGE

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

GLASGOW

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1800

F E N E L O N

O N

D E J E C T I O N,

O R

L O W N E S S O F S P I R I T S.

AS to what regards a certain low-
ness of spirits, that contracts
the heart, and damps it; these two
rules seem to me of importance. The
first is, to remedy this lowness, by the
means Providence furnishes us: for
example, not to overload ourselves
with toilsome affairs; that we may
not succumb under an unequal bur-
den. to husband not only the strength
of the body; but, even that of the

A

mind; by not taking things upon ourselves, in which we should reckon too much on our own courage. to reserve, always, hours for contemplation; for reading; for encouraging ourselves by good conversations; even being gay; in order to unbend, all at once, the mind along with the body; according to the occasion.

WE must, besides, have some sure, and discreet person; to whom we may unbosom ourselves, about every thing, that concerns not the secret of another. for this unloading eases, and enlarges the oppress'd heart.

PAINS too long kept in, often swell, even to bursting the heart. If they could be exhal'd, we shou'd see they do not merit all the bitterness they have occasioned.

NOTHING draws a soul so much out of a certain profound darkness, as the simplicity, and lowliness; with which, she exposes her discouragements at the expence of her glory: demanding light and consolation, in the communion she ought to have, among the children of God.

THE second rule is to bear peacefully all the involuntary impressions of dejection we suffer; in spite of the helps and precautions, we have been just now explaining.

THE internal discouragements make us go more speedily, than every thing else, in the way of faith: provided they do not make us stand still; and the involuntary slackness of the soul does not deliver her up to this dejection; that seizes, as it

were, by force, on the whole internal.

A STEP made in this state, is always a gigantic one; it is more worth than a thousand made in a disposition more sweet and consoling. We have nothing to do then but despise our discouragement, and be always going on, in order to render this state of weakness more useful and grand, than that of courage and the most heroic strength.

O! how deceitful is that sensible courage, that renders all easy; that does and suffers all; that is well-pleased with itself for never hesitating. O! how it nourishes self-confidence; and a certain upliftedness of heart. This courage, that sometimes wonderfully edifies the public, nou-

rishtes within a certain satisfaction and testimony we render ourselves, that is a subtil poison.

WE relish our own virtue, are complacent in it, and well-pleased with ourselves for its strength.

A SOUL, weaken'd and humbled, that finds no longer any refuge in herself, that fears, that is troubled, that is sorrowful even to death, that crys out, in fine, as Jesus Christ, when he was in the garden, O God! O my God! why hast thou forsaken me? is much more purified, more loosened from herself, more annihilated and dead to all self-desire, than strong souls, who enjoy in peace the fruits of their virtue.

HAPPY the soul! that God casts

down; that God bruises; from whom God has taken away all strength in herself, that she may no longer support herself, but in him; that sees her poverty, that is content with it; that bears, besides the crosses without, the great internal cross of discouragement; without which all the others would weigh nothing.

NON

ON
DISSIPATION

AND

DEJECTION OF MIND.

I. YOU are in pain about two things; the one, to shun dissipation; and, the other, to support yourself against dejection. for dissipation; you will never cure yourself of that by forced reflexions. hope not to perform the work of grace by the * means and industry of nature. content yourself with giving your will to God without reserve; and when the thoughts of any state of pain come into your mind, always think on it so as that you would accept

* les refforts.

of it, by an abandoning of yourself to his divine providence.

TAKE great care, never to go to meet these thoughts of the cross: but when God permits them to come upon you without your having sought for them, never let them pass without fruit.

ACCEPT, in spite of the reluctancies and horrors of nature, whatever God presents to your mind, as a trial by which he might exercise your faith. do not put yourself at all in pain to know if you shall have strength to execute, in the occasion, what at a distance you desire to do. the occasion when present will have its own grace. but the grace of the moment, in which you think of these crosses,

is, heartily, to accept them, at the time, God shall give you them.

THIS foundation laid; walk on, in tranquillity, and confidence. provided this disposition of your will be not changed, by voluntary attachments to something against the order of God; it will subsist, always.

YOUR imagination will be wandering, on a thousand vain objects. it will, even, be more, or less agitated; according to the places you are in: and, according as it is more or less disordered, by objects, more striking, or languishing. but, what, then? the imagination, as St. Therese says, is the fool of the house: she never ceases, making noise; and, shining. the mind, itself, is drawn away by her. it cannot help seeing the objects she

presents it. its attention to images is unavoidable, and this attention is a real straying. but, provided it be involuntary, it never separates us from God: it is only the straying of the will that does all the harm.

IF your will never concur to your straying, you never will stray; and it will be the truth to say of you, your contemplation has never decayed. every time you perceive your straying; let it fall, without combating it; and, return gently, to the side of God; without any struggle of mind.

WHEN you are not sensible of this straying; it will not be a straying of the heart. as soon as you perceive it; lift up your eyes toward God. the fidelity you have in re-entering

his presence every time you are sensible of your state, will make you deserve the favour of a more frequent presence. and this, if I am not mistaken, is the way to render this presence very soon familiar.

THIS ready fidelity to turn away from other objects, every time the straying is observed, will not be long in a soul without a frequent and easy recollection. but it must not be imagined we can enter into this state by efforts of our own. such a struggling would render you constrained, scrupulous, uneasy in the affairs and conversations where you have occasion for being free. you would be always in fear lest the presence of God escaped you; always running to recover it, you would

be enveloped in all the phantoms of your imagination.

THUS the presence of God that ought, by its sweetness and light, to facilitate our application to all the other objects we have occasion to consider in the order of God, would render you, on the contrary, always in agitation, and incapable of the external functions of your condition.

NEVER be uneasy then that this sensible presence of God has escaped you; but, above all, be much upon your guard, against desiring a presence of God, supported by reason and reflections.

CONTENT yourself, in the course of the day and detail of your occu-

pations, with a general and confused view of God; in such sort, that, if it were asked you then, what is the disposition of your heart? it would be the truth to say, it tended to God, altho' you were then attentive to some other object.

do not put yourself at all in pain for the wanderings of your imagination that you cannot command. we stray often from fear of straying, and after that, from regret of having done it.

WHAT would you say of a man, who, in a journey, instead of going on always without stopping, should spend his time in foreseeing the falls he might make? and, when he made any one, in returning to see the place where he had fallen?

GO on, go on, would you say to him. I say the same to you. go on, without looking behind you; and, without stopping, walk, says the apostle, that you may the more abound. the abounding of the love of God will correct you more than your own inquietudes, and frequent returns on yourself.

THIS rule is simple: but nature, accustomed to do all, by sentiment and reflexion, finds it simple, even to excess.

WE would assist ourselves and give ourselves more spring. but 'tis in this the goodness of the rule consists, that it keeps in a state of pure faith; where we support ourselves on God alone; to whom we abandon ourselves, and

where we die to ourselves, by suppressing whatever is of self.

BY this we do not multiply external actions, that might constrain persons very much employed, or hurt their health. we turn these actions all to loving, but, to loving simply. thus we are never overloaded. for we bear only what we love. this rule, taken right, is sufficient also for curing dejection.

II. DEJECTION, or melancholy, proceeds often from this, that, when seeking God, we do not feel him enough, to be content. the desire of feeling him is not the desire of possessing him. but it is the desire of being assured, for the love of ourselves, that we possess him, in order to our own consolation.

NATURE, damped and discouraged, is impatient to draw self from pure faith, where she wants all support: she is, in that state, as in the air, she would feel her own advancement.

AT the sight of her faults our pride frets; and we take this fretting of our pride for a sentiment of penitence.

WE would, from self-love, have the pleasure of seeing ourselves perfect. we chide ourselves for not being so. we are impatient, haughty, and out of humour at ourselves and others. deplorable error! as if the work of God would be accomplished by our chagrin! as if we could unite ourselves to the God of peace by losing our peace within.

MARTHA! Martha! why art thou

troubled about so many things for the service of Jesus Christ? one only is needful, to love him, and keep attentive at his feet.

WHEN we are intirely abandoned to God; all is done, without doing any thing. we let ourselves be conducted with confidence. for what is to come, we will, without reserve, whatever God shall will; and we shut our eyes that we may foresee nothing. we apply ourselves, however, in what is present, to accomplish his will.

SUFFICIENT for every day is its own good and evil. this daily accomplishment of the will of God, is the coming of his kingdom within us, and, at the same time, our daily bread.

WE would think ourselves infidels, and guilty of a Pagan distrust, if we desired to penetrate into the futurity that God conceals from us. we leave it to him. it is his to make sweet or bitter, short or long. let him do what is good in his own eyes.

THE most perfect preparation for this futurity, whatever it be, is to die to all wills of our own, that we may wholly give ourselves up to that of God.

AS manna had all tastes; this general disposition contains all graces, and all sentiments, suitable to all states God may place us in hereafter.

III. WHEN we are thus ready for all, it is in this bottom of the abyss

we begin to take footing. we are as calm about the past as about the future.

we suppose of ourselves all the worst we can; but we throw ourselves blindly into the arms of God: we forget ourselves; we lose ourselves: and this is the most perfect penitence, this oblivion of ourselves. for all conversion consists, only in renouncing ourselves to be employed in God. this oblivion is the martyrdom of self-love. we would love a hundred times better, to contradict, condemn, torment ourselves, mind and body, than forget ourselves.

THIS oblivion is an annihilation of self-love, in which it finds no refuge. then the heart enlarges; we are eased by unburdening the whole weight

of ourselves, with which we were oppressed. we are astonished, to see how straight and simple the way is. we believed, there was occasion for a continual struggle, and always some new action, on the contrary, we perceive, there is little to do; that it is sufficient, without reasoning, either on the past, or the future, to look on God with confidence; as a good father, who leads us, in the present moment, as by the hand.

IF by any straying of the mind we lose sight of him, without stopping at this, we turn again toward him from whom we had wandered. if we commit faults, the penitence we have for them is all of love; we turn again toward God; and he makes us feel what is his will,

THE sin appears hideous: but the humiliation rising from it, and for which God has permitted it, appears good.

As much as the reflections of pride on our own faults are bitter, restless, and chagrin, so much is the return of the soul to God, after its faults, recollected, peaceful, and supported by confidence.

You will find, by experience, how much this simple and peaceful return will facilitate your correction, more than all your vexations for the faults that prevail on you.

ONLY be faithful in turning yourself, with simplicity, toward God, the moment you perceive your fault. it will be in vain for you, to

chicane with yourself. it is not with yourself you ought to take your measures. when you torment yourself about your own miseries, I see nobody in your council, but you alone with yourself. poor council! in which God is not.

who will reach out his hand to help you out of the mire? will it be you? ha! 'tis you yourself who are sunk into it, and cannot get out. besides, this mire is yourself. the whole source of your misfortune, is, you cannot get out of yourself.

do you hope to get out of it by conversing always with yourself? and nourishing your sensibility, by the sight of your weaknesses? you do nothing, but increase your tenderness for yourself, by all these re-

turns. but the least view of God would calm your heart, disordered by your being thus busy about yourself. his presence works, always, the going out of ourselves; and, this is what we want. go out of yourself, then, and you will be in peace. but, how shall we go out of ourselves? we need only turn gently, on the side of God, and form, by little and little, the habit of it; by our fidelity in returning to him, every time we perceive ourselves stray'd,

As for the natural dejection occasioned by melancholy, it proceeds only from the body. thus, regimen and medicines diminish it.

IT is true, it always returns; but it is not voluntary. When God gives

it, we support it in peace, as the fever, and other bodily disorders.

THE imagination is in a profound darkness. it is all hung in mourning. but the will, that is nourish'd only by pure faith, is well satisfy'd to undergo the trial of all these impressions. thus, we are in peace; because immediately we are with ourselves, and resign'd to God.

THE question is not, what we feel; but, what we will. we will whatever we have; we will nothing of what we have not. we would not be delivered by ourselves, from what we suffer, because it belongs only to God, to distribute crosses and consolations. we are in joy, amid tribulations; as the apostle says: not a joy of the senses, but a joy of pure will.

THE impious, amid their pleasures, have a constrained will, because they are never content with their condition. they would drive away certain disgusts, and taste still some pleasures they want.

ON the contrary, the faithful soul has a will constrained in nothing; she accepts freely every kind of pain God gives her. she wills it, she loves it, she embraces it, she would not quit it, even tho' it cost her but a single desire: because, that desire would be a selfish one; and, contrary to her abandon to providence, which she will never prevent, in any thing.

IF any thing is capable of setting the heart at large, and making it free; it is this abandon. it diffuses in the heart a peace, more overflowing than the rivers; and, a justice, that is as the

depths of the sea. (an expression of Isaiah.) If any thing can render a man's mind serene, dissipate its scruples and its dark fears, soften its pains by the unction of love, give him a certain vigour in all his actions, and shed the joy of the Holy Spirit, even on his countenance, and in his words; it is this simple, free, and child-like conduct, in the arms of God.

BUT, we reason too much, and hurt ourselves with reasoning. there is a temptation to reasoning we must be afraid of, as of other temptations.

THERE is an occupation about ourselves, nice, restless, and distrustful; which is a temptation so much the more subtle, that we do not look on it as one; and that on the

contrary, we sink into it, more and more; because we take it for the vigilance commanded in the Gospel.

IV. THE vigilance Jesus Christ enjoins, is a faithful attention to love always, and accomplish the will of God, in the present moment; according to the signs we have of it. but, it consists not in troubling and putting ourselves to the torture; and being incessantly employed about ourselves, rather than lift our eyes toward God; from whom comes our only help against ourselves.

WHY, under pretence of vigilance, will we be obstinate to discover in ourselves, what it is not the will of God we should see, during this life? Why lose, by that, the fruit of pure faith, and inward peace? Why turn away from the presence of God;

which, it is his will to render continual to us. he has not said, Be yourselves always the object before which you shall walk: but, he has said, Walk BEFORE ME, and become perfect.

DAVID, full of his spirit, has said: I saw God always before me. and, again; My eyes are always lifted toward the Lord, that he may guard my feet from the nets. the danger is at his feet. his eyes, however, are on high. it is less useful to consider our danger, than the assistance of God. beside, we see all reunited in God. we see, there, both human misery, and the divine goodness. a single glance of a soul upright and pure, be it never so simple, perceives all in this infinite light.

BUT, on the contrary, what can we

see in our own darkness? except, our very darkness. O my God? provided, I never cease to see thee; I shall never cease to see myself, in all my miseries. and I shall see myself much better in thee, than in myself. true vigilance, is, to see in thee, thy will, that I may accomplish it; and, not reason, without end, on the state of my own.

WHEN external occupations hinder me from seeing thee alone, by shutting, in contemplation, the avenues of my senses; yet, even then, at least, I shall see thee, O Lord! doing all, in all.

I SHALL every where see, with joy, thy will accomplish'd, both within me, and without. I shall incessantly say, Amen; as the blessed. I shall always sing in my heart, the

song of the celestial Sion. I shall bless thee, even in the wicked; who, by their bad will, accomplish, still in spite of themselves, thy will, all-just, all-holy, and all-powerful. in the chaste liberty of the spirit, thou givest thy children, I shall act and speak in simplicity, chearfulness and confidence. ‘Tho’ I pass thro’ the shades
‘ of death, I will fear nothing; for,
‘ thou art always with me. I will
‘ never seek any danger; never enter
‘ into any engagements, but with
‘ signs of thy providence; that they
‘ may be my strength and consolation
‘ in it. even, in the states, where
‘ thy call will support me; I will
‘ give, to recollection, contemplation
‘ and retirement, all the days, the
‘ hours, the moments, thou shalt
‘ leave me, free. I will never quit this
‘ blessed state, farther than thou
‘ shalt call me, thyself, to some exter-

‘nal function. then, I will go out of
‘thee, in appearance; but, thou
‘wilt go out with me. and, in this
‘apparent out-going, thou wilt carry
‘me in thy bosom. I will not seek
‘myself, in my commerce with the
‘creatures. I will not be afraid, re-
‘collection diminish my agreeable-
‘ness among them, and make my
‘conversation dry. for, my will is
‘not to please them, farther than I
‘must do it, to please thee.

‘IF thou wilt make use of me, for
‘thy work on them, I surrender my-
‘self, and without reflexion on my-
‘self, will, in simplicity, pour forth
‘on them, whatever of thy gifts thou
‘hast made to flow on me. I will
‘not walk, groping, by falling al-
‘ways back on myself. however
‘dangerous and dissipating this func-
‘tion may be, I will behave myself
‘in simplicity before thee, with an

‘upright intention; knowing how
‘good the Father is, before whom
‘I walk; and, that he desires no
‘subtilty in his own.

‘IF on the contrary, thou wilt not
‘make use of me for others, I will
‘not offer myself. I will not go be-
‘fore, in any thing. I will do, in
‘peace, the other things, to which
‘thou hast bounded me. for, accor-
‘ding to the attraction of the state
‘of abandon, thou hast given me,
‘I desire, nor refuse, nothing. I am
‘ready for all, and I consent to be
‘useless to all.

‘SOUGHT for, rejected, known,
‘not known, applauded, inveighed
‘against, what is it to me? ’tis THEE,
‘I seek, and not myself; thee, and
‘not thy gifts; distinguish’d from
‘thee and from thy love, all condi-
‘tions are indifferent to me.

7 AP 66

• F I N I S.

